IN LUCK AT LAST.

BY WALTER BESANT.

[Continued From Sunday, September 27.]

"Where's the Admiral, Foxy?" asked the caller.

"Guv'nor's up stairs, Mr. Joseph, taking of his tea with Miss Iris," replied Mr. James, not at all offended by the allusion to his craftiness. Who should resemble the Fox if not the second-hand bookseller? In no trade, perhaps, can the truly admirable qualities of that animal—his patience, his subtlety and craft, his pertinacity, his sagacity—be illustrated more to advantage. Mr. James felt a glow of virtue—would that he could grow daily and hourly, and more and more towards the perfect fox. Then, indeed, and not till then would he be able to live truly up to his second-hand books.

"Having tea with Iris; well——"

The speaker looked as if it required some effort to receive this statement with resignation.

"He always does at six o'clock. Why shouldn't he?" asked Mr. James.

"Because, James, he spends the time in cockering up that gal whom he's ruined and spoiled—him and the old Nigger between them—so that her mind is poisoned against her lawful relatives, and nothing will content her but coming into all the old man's money, instead of going share and share alike, as a cousin should, and especially a she cousin, while there's a biscuit left in the locker and a drop of rum in the cask."

"Ah!" said Mr. James with a touch of sympathy, called forth, perhaps, by mention of the rum, which is a favorite drink with second-hand booksellers' assistants.

"Nothing too good for her," the other went on; "the best of education, pianos to play upon, and nobody good enough for her to know. Not on visiting terms, if you please, with her neighbors; waiting for duchesses to call upon her. And what is she, after all? A miserable teacher!"

Mr. Joseph Gallop was a young man somewhere between twenty and thirty, tall, large limbed, well set-up, and broad shouldered. A young man who, at first sight, would seem eminently fitted to push his own fortunes. Also, at first sight, a remarkably handsome fellow, with straight, clear cut features and light, curly hair. When he swung along the street, his round hat carelessly thrown back, and his handsome face lit up by the sun, the old women murmured a blessing upon his comely head—as they used to do, a long time ago, upon the comely and curly head of Absalom—and the young women looked meaningly at one another—as was also done in the case of Absalom—and the object of their admiration knew that they were saying to each other, in the feminine way, what a look is as good as a whisper, "There goes a handsome fellow." Those who knew him better, and had looked more closely into his face, said that his mouth was bad and his eyes shifty. The same opinion was held by the wiser sort as regards his character. For, on the one hand, some averred that to their certain knowledge Joe Gallop had shown himself a monster of ingratitude towards his grandfather, who had paid his debts and done all kinds of things for him; on the other hand there were some who thought he had been badly treated; and some said that no good would ever come of a young fellow who was never able to remain in the same situation more than a month or so; and others said that he had certainly been unfortunate, but that he was a quick and clever young man, who would some day find the kind of work that suited him, and then he would show everybody of what stuff he was composed. As for us, we have only to judge of him by his actions.

"Perhaps, Mr. Joseph," said Mr. James, "perhaps Miss Iris won't have all bequeathed to her."

"Do you know anything?" Joe asked quickly. "Has he made a new will lately?"

"Not that I know of. But Mr. Chalker has been here off and on a good bit now."

"Ah! Chalker's a close one, too. Else he'd tell me, his old friend. Look here, Foxy," he turned a beaming and smiling face upon the assistant. "If you should see anything or find anything out, tell me, mind. And, remember, I'll make it worth your while."

Mr. James looked as if he was asking himself how Joseph could make it worth his while, seeing that he got nothing more from his grandfather, and by his own showing never would have anything more.

"It's only his will I'm anxious to know about; that, and where he's put away all his money. Think what a dreadful thing it would be for his heirs if he were to go and die suddenly, and none of us to know where his investments are. As for the shop, that is already disposed of, as I dare say you know."

"Disposed of! The shop disposed of! Oh, Lord!" The assistant turned pale. "Oh, Mr. Joseph," he asked earnestly, "what will become of the shop? And who is to have it?"

"I am to have it," Mr. Joseph replied calmly. This was the lie absolute, and he invented it very cleverly and at the right moment—a thing which gives strength and life to a lie, because he already suspected the truth and guessed the secret hope and ambition which possesses every ambitious assistant in this trade—namely, to get the succession. Mr. James looked upon himself as the lawful and rightful heir to the business. But sometimes he entertained grievous doubts, and now indeed his heart sank into his boots. "I am to have it," Joe repeated.

"Oh, I didn't know. You are to have it, then? Oh!"

If Mr. James had been ten years younger I think he would have burst into tears. But at the age of forty weeping no longer presents itself as a form of relief. It is more usual to seek consolation in a swear. He stammered, however, while he turned pale, and then red, and then pale again.

"Yes, quite proper, Mr. Joseph, I'm sure, and a most beautiful business may be made again here by one who understands the way. Oh, you are a lucky man, Mr. Joseph. You are indeed, sir, to get such a noble chance."

"The shop," Joe went on, "was settled—settled upon me long ago." The verb "to settle" is capable of conveying large and vague impressions. "But after all, what's the good of this place to a sailor?"

"The good—the good of this place?" Mr. James's cheek flushed. "Why, to make money, to be sure—to coin money in. If I had this place to myself—why—why, in two years I would be making as much as 200 a year. I would indeed."

"You want to make money. Bah! That's all you fellows think of. To sit in the back shop all day long and to sell mouldy books! We jolly sailor boys know better than that; my lad."

There really was something nautical about the look of the man. He wore a black silk tie, in a sailor's running knot, the ends loose; his waistcoat was unbuttoned, and his coat was a kind of jacket; not to speak of his swinging walk and careless pose. In fact, he had been a sailor; he had made two voyages to India and back, as assistant purser, or purser's clerk, on board P. and O. boat, but some disagreement with his commanding officer concerning negligence, or impudence, or drink, or laziness—he had been charged in different situations and at different times with all these vices, either together or separately—caused him to lose his rating on the ship's books. However, he brought away from his short nautical experience, and preserved, a certain nautical swagger, which accorded well with his appearance, and gave him a swashbuckler air, which made those who knew him well lament that he had not graced the Elizabethan era, when he might have become a gallant buccaneer, and so got himself shot through the head, or that he had not flourished under the reign of good Queen Anne, when he would probably have turned pirate and been hanged; or that, being born in the Victorian age, he had not gone to the Far West, where he would, at least, have had the chance of getting shot in a gambling saloon.

"As for me, when I get the business," he continued, "I shall look about for some one to carry it on until I am able to sell it for what it will fetch. Books at a penny apiece all round, I suppose"—James gasped—"shop furniture thrown in"—James panted—"and the goodwill for a small, lump sum." James wondered how far his own savings, and what he could borrow, might go towards that lump sum, and how much might "remain." "My grandfather, as you know, of course, is soon going to retire from business altogether." This was another lie absolute, as Mr. Emblem had no intention whatever of retiring.

"Soon, Mr. Joseph? He has never said a word to me about it."

"Very soon, now—sooner than you expect. At seventy-five, and with all his money, why should he go on slaving any longer? Very soon, indeed. Any day."

"Mr. Joseph," the assistant positively trembled with eagerness and apprehension. "What is it, James? Did you really think that a man like me was going to sit in a back shop among these mouldy volumes all day? Come, that's too good. You might have given me credit for being one cut above a counter, too. I am a gentleman, James, if you please; I am an officer and a gentleman."

He then proceeded to explain, in language that smacked something of the sea, that his ideas soared far above trade, which was, at best, a contemptible occupation, and quite unworthy of a gentleman, particularly of an officer and a gentleman; and that his personal friends would never condescend even to formal acquaintance, not to speak of friendship, with trade. This discourse may be omitted. When one reads about such a man as Joe Gallop, when we are told how he looked and what he said and how he said it, with what gestures and in what tone, we feel as if it would be impossible for the simplest person in the world to be mistaken as to his real character. My friends, especially my young friends, so far from the discernment of character being easy, it is, on the contrary, an art most difficult, and very rarely attained. Nature's indications are a kind of handwriting, the characters in which are known to few, so that, for instance, the quick, inquiring glance of an eye, in which one may easily read—who knows the character—treachery, lying and deception, just as in the letter Beth was originally easily discerned the effigies of a house, may very easily pass unread by the multitude. The language, or rather the alphabet, is much less complicated than the cuneiform of the Medes and Persians, yet no one studies it, except women, most of whom are profoundly skilled in this lore, which makes them so fearfully and wonderfully wise. Thus it is easy for man to deceive his brother man, but not his sister woman. Again, most of us are glad to take everybody on his own statements; there are, or may be, we are all ready to acknowledge, with sorrow for erring humanity, somewhere else in the world, such things as pretending, swindling, acting a part and cheating, but they do not and cannot belong to our own world. Mr. James, the assistant, very well knew that Mr. Emblem's grandson had already, though still young, as bad a record as could be desired by any; that he had been turned out of one situation after another; that his grandfather had long since refused to help him any more; that he was always to be found in the broad path which leadeth to destruction. When he had money he ran down that path as fast as his legs could carry him; when he had none, he only walked and wished he could run. But he never left it, and never wished to leave it. Knowing all this, the man accepted and believed every word of Joe's story. James believed it, because he hoped it. He listened respectfully to Joe's declamation on the meanness of trade, and then he rubbed his hands, and said humbly that he ventured to hope, when the sale of the business came on, Mr. Joseph would let him have a chance.

"You!" asked Joe. 'I never thought of you. But why not? Why not, I say? Why not you as well as anybody else?"

"Nobody but me, Mr. Joseph, knows what the business is, and how it might be improved, and I could make arrangements for paying by regular instalments."

"Well, we'll talk about it when the time comes. I won't forget. Sailors, you know, can't be expected to understand the value of shops. Say, James, what does the Commodore do all day?"

"Sits in there and adds up his investments."

"Always doing that—eh? Always adding 'em up? Ah! and you've never got a chance of looking over his shoulder, I suppose?"

"Never."

"You may find that chance, one of these days. I should like to know, if only for curiosity, what they are and where they are. He sits in there and adds 'em up. Yes—I've seen him at it. There must be thousands by this time."

"Thousands," said the assistant, in the belief that the more you add up a sum the larger it grows.

Joe walked into the back shop and tried the safe.

"Where are the keys?" he asked.

"Always in his pocket or on the table before him. He don't leave them about."

"Or you'd ha' known pretty sharp all there is to know—eh, my lad? Well, you're a Foxy one, you are, if ever there was one. Let's be pals, you and me. When the old man goes, you want the shop—well, I don't see why you shouldn't have the shop; somebody must have the shop, and it will be mine to do what I please with. As for his savings, he says they are all for Iris—well, wills have been set aside before this. Do you think now, seriously, do you think, James, that the old man is quite right—eh? Don't answer in a hurry. Do you think, now, that he is quite right in his chump?"

James laughed.

"He's right enough, though he throws away his chances."

"Throws away his chances. How the deuce can he be all right then? Did you ever hear of a bookseller in his right mind throwing away his chances?"

"Why—no—for that matter——"

"Very well, then; for that matter, don't forget that you've seen him throw away all his chances—all his chances, you said. You are ready to swear to that. Most important evidence, that, James." James had not said "all," but he grunted, and the other man went on: "It may come in useful, this recollection. Keep your eyes wide open, my red-haired pirate. As for the mouldy old shop, you may consider it as good as your own. Why, I suppose you'll get somebody else to handle the paste-brush and scissors, and tie up the parcels, and water the shop—eh? You'll be too proud to do that for yourself, you will."

Mr. James grinned and rubbed his hands.

"All your own—eh? Well, you'll make 'em up a bit, won't you?"

Mr. James grinned again—he continued grinning.

"Go on, Mr. Joseph," he said; "go on—I like it."

"Consider the job as settled, then. As for terms, they shall be easy; I'm not a hard man. And—I say, Foxy, about that safe?"

Mr. James suddenly ceased grinning, because he observed a look in his patron's eyes which alarmed him.

"About that safe. You must find out for me where the old man has put his money, and what it is worth. Do you hear? Or else——"

"How can I find out? He won't tell me any more than you."

"Or else you must put me in the way of finding out." Mr. Joseph lowered his voice to a whisper. "He keeps the keys on the table before him. When a customer takes him out here, he leaves the keys behind him. Do you know the key of the safe?"

"Yes, I know it."

"What is to prevent a clever, quick-eyed fellow like you, mate, stepping in with a bit of wax—eh? While he is talking, you know. You could rush it in a moment."

"It's—it's dangerous, Mr. Joseph."

"So it is—rather dangerous—not much. What of that?"

"I would do anything I could to be of service to you, Mr. Joseph; but that's not honest, and it's dangerous."

"Dangerous! There's danger in the briny deep and shipwreck on the blast, if you come to danger. Do we, therefore, jolly mariners afloat, ever think of that? Never. As to honesty, don't make a man sick."

"Look here, Mr. Joseph. If you'll give me a promise in writing that I'm to have the shop as soon as you get it, at a fair valuation and easy terms—say ten per cent. down, and——"

"Stow it, mate; write what you like, and I'll sign it. Now about that key?"

"Stow it, mate; write what you like, and I'll sign it. Now about that key?"

"Supposing you were to get a duplicate key, and supposing you was to get into trouble about it, Mr. Joseph, should you—should you—I only put it to you—should you up and round upon the man as got you that key?"

"Foxy, you are as suspicious as a Chinaman. Well, then, do it this way. Send it me in a letter, and then who is to know where the letter came from?"

The assistant nodded.

"Then I think I can do the job, though not, perhaps, your way. But I think I can do it. I won't promise for a day or two."

"There you spoke like an honest pal and a friendly shipmate. Dangerous! Of course it is. When the roaring winds do blow—Hands upon it, brother. Foxy, you've never done a better day's work. You are too crafty for any sailor—you are, indeed. Here, just for a little key——"

"Hush, Mr. Joseph! Oh, pray—pray don't talk so loud! You don't know who may be listening. There's Mr. Lala Roy. You never hear him coming."

"Just for a trifle of a key you are going to get possession of the best book shop in all Chelsea. Well, keep your eyes skinned and the wax ready, will you? And now, James, I'll be off."

"Oh, I say, Mr. Joseph, wait a moment!" James was beginning to realize what he had promised. "If anything dreadful should come of this! I don't know what is in the safe. There may be money as well as papers."

"James, do you think I would steal? Do you mean to insinuate that I am a thief, sir? Do you dare to suspect that I would take money?"

James certainly looked as if he had thought even that possible.

"I shall open the safe, take out the papers, read them, and put them back just as I found them. Will that do for you?"

He shook hands again, and took himself off.

At 7 o'clock Mr. Emblem came down stairs again.

"Has any one been?" he asked as usual.

"Only Mr. Joseph."

"What might Mr. Joseph want?"

"Nothing at all."

"Then," said his grandfather, "Mr. Joseph might just as well have kept away."

Let us anticipate a little. James spent the next day hovering about in the hope that an opportunity would offer of getting the key in his possession for a few moments. There was no opportunity. The bunch of keys lay on the table under the old man's eyes all day, and when he left the table he carried them with him. But the day afterwards he got his chance. One of the old customers called to talk over past bargains and former prizes. Mr. Emblem came out of the back shop with his visitor, and continued talking with him as far as the door. As he passed the table—James's table—he rested the hand which carried the keys on it, and left them there. James pounced upon them and slipped them into his pocket noiselessly. Mr. Erablem returned to his own chair and thought nothing of the keys for an hour and a half by the clock, and during this period James was out on business. When Mr. Emblem remembered his keys he felt for them in their usual place and missed them, and then began searching about and cried out to James that he had lost his bunch of keys.

"Why, sir," said James, bringing them to him, after a little search, and with a very red face, "here they are; you must have left them on my table."

And in this way the job was done.

CHAPTER III.

IRIS THE HERALD.

By a somewhat remarkable coincidence it was on this very evening that Iris first made the acquaintance of her pupil, Mr. Arnold Arbuthnot. These coincidences, I believe, happen oftener in real life than they do on the stage, where people are always turning up at the very nick of time and the critical moment.

I need little persuasion to make me believe that the first meeting of Arnold Arbuthnot and Iris, on the very evening when her cousin was opening matters with the Foxy one, was nothing short of providential. You shall see, presently, what things might have happened if they had not met. The meeting was, in fact, the second of the three really important events in the life of a girl. The first, which is seldom remembered with the gratitude which it deserves, is her birth; the second, the first meeting with her future lover; the third, her wedding day; the other events of a woman's life are interesting, perhaps, but not important.

Certain circumstances, which will be immediately explained, connected with this meeting, made it an event of very considerable interest to Iris, even though she did not suspect its immense importance. So much interest that she thought of nothing else for a week beforehand; that as the appointed hour drew near she trembled and grew pale; that when her grandfather came up for his tea, she, who was usually so quick to discern the least sign of care or anxiety in his face, actually did not observe the trouble, plainly written in his drooping head and anxious eyes, which was due to his interview with Mr. David Chalker.

She poured out the tea, therefore, without one word of sympathy. This would have seemed hard if her grandfather had expected any. He did not, however, because he did not know that the trouble showed in his face, and was trying to look as if nothing had happened. Yet in his brain were ringing and resounding the words, "Within three weeks—within three weeks," with the regularity of a horrid clock at midnight when one wants to go to sleep.

"Oh," cried Iris, forced, as young people always are, to speak of her own trouble; "oh, grandfather, he is coming to-night."

"Who is coming to-night, my dear?" and then he listened again for the ticking of that clock: "Within three weeks—within three weeks." "Who is coming to-night, my dear?"

He took the cup of tea from her, and sat down with an old man's deliberation, which springs less from wisdom and the fullness of thought than from respect to rheumatism.

The iteration of that refrain, "Within three weeks," made him forget everything, even the trouble of his granddaughter's mind.

"Oh, grandfather, you cannot have forgotten!"

She spoke with the least possible touch of irritation, because she had been thinking of this thing for a week past, day and night, and it was a thing of such stupendous interest to her that it seemed impossible that any one who knew of it could forget what was coming.

"No, no." The old man was stimulated into immediate recollection by the disappointment in her eyes. "No, no, my deary, I have not forgotten. Your pupil is coming. Mr. Arbuthnot is coming. But, Iris, child, don't let that worry you. I will see him for you, if you like."

"No; I must see him myself. You see, dear, there is the awful deception. Oh, how shall I tell him?"

"No deception at all," he said stoutly. "You advertised in your own initials. He never asked if the initials belonged to a man or to a woman. The other pupils do not know. Why should this one? What does it matter to him if you have done the work for which he engaged your services?"

"But, oh, he is so different! And the others, you know, keep to the subject."

"So should he, then. Why didn't he?"

"But he hasn't. And I have been answering him, and he must think that I was drawing him on to tell me more about himself, and now, oh, what will he think? I drew him on and on—yet I didn't mean to—till at last he writes to say that he regards me as the best friend and the wisest adviser he has ever had. What will he think and say? Grandfather, it is dreadful!"

"What did you tell him for, Iris, my dear? Why couldn't you let things go on? And by telling him you will lose your pupil."

"Yes, of course; and, worse still, I shall lose his letters. We live so quietly here that his letters have come to me like news of another world. How many different worlds are there all round one in London? It has been pleasant to read of that one in which ladies go about beautifully dressed always, and where the people have nothing to do but to amuse themselves. He has told me about this world in which he lives, and about his own life, so that I know everything he does and where he goes; and"—here she sighed heavily—"of course it could not go on forever; and I should not mind so much if it had not been carried on under false pretences."

"No false pretences at all, my dear. Don't think it."

"I sent back his last cheque," she said, trying to find a little consolation for herself. "But yet——"

"Well, Iris," said her grandfather, "he wanted to learn heraldry, and you have taught him."

"For the last three months"—the girl blushed as if she was confessing her sins—"for the last three months there has not been a single word in his letters about heraldry. He tells me that he writes because he is idle, or because he wants to talk, or because he is alone in his studio, or because he wants his unknown friend's advice. I am his unknown friend, and I have been giving him advice."

"And very good advice, too," said her grandfather benevolently. "Who is so wise as my Iris?"

"I have answered all his letters, and never once told him that I am only a girl."

"I am glad you did not tell him, Iris," said her grandfather; but he did not say why he was glad. "And why can't he go on writing his letters without making any fuss?"

"Because he says he must make the acquaintance of the man—the man, he says—with whom he has been in correspondence so long. This is what he says."

She opened a letter which lay upon a table covered with papers, but her grandfather stopped her.

"Well, my dear, I do not want to know what he says. He wishes to make your acquaintance. Very good, then. You are going to see him, and to tell him who you are. That is enough. But as for deceiving"—he paused, trying to understand this extreme scrupulosity of conscience—"if you come to deceiving—well, in a kind of a sort of way you did allow him to think his correspondent a man. I admit that. What harm is done to him? None. He won't be so mean, I suppose, as to ask for his money back again."

"I think he ought to have it all back," said Iris; "yes, all from the very beginning. I am ashamed that I ever took any money from him. My face burns when I think of it."

To this her grandfather made no reply. The returning of money paid for services rendered was, to his commercial mind, too foolish a thing to be even talked about. At the same time Iris was quite free to manage her own affairs. And then there was that roll of papers in the safe. Why, what matter if she sent away all her pupils? He changed the subject.

"Iris, my dear," he said, "about this other world, where the people amuse themselves; the world which lives in the squares and in the big houses on the Chelsea embankment here, you know—how should you like, just for a change, to belong to that world and have no work to do?"

"I don't know," she replied carelessly, because the question did not interest her.

"You would have to leave me, of course. You would sever your connection, as they say, with the shop."

"Please, don't let us talk nonsense, grandfather."

"You would have to be ashamed, perhaps, of ever having taught for your living."

"Now that I never should be—never, not if they made me a duchess."

"You would go dressed in silk and velvet. My dear, I should like to see you dressed up just for once, as we have seen them at the theatre."

"Well, I should like one velvet dress in my life. Only one. And it should be crimson—a beautiful, deep, dark crimson."

"Very good. And you would drive in a carriage instead of an omnibus; you would sit in the stalls instead of the upper circle; you would give quantities of money to poor people; and you would buy as many second-hand books as you pleased. There are rich people, I believe, ostentatious people, who buy new books. But you, my dear, have been better brought up. No books are worth buying till they have stood the criticism of a whole generation at least. Never buy new books, my dear."

"I won't," said Iris. "But, you dear old man, what have you got in your head to-night? Why in the world should we talk about getting rich?"

"But, you dear old man, what have you got in your head to-night?"

"I was only thinking," he said, "that perhaps you might be so much happier——"

"Happier? Nonsense! I am as happy as I can be. Six pupils already. To be sure I have lost one," she sighed; "and the best among them all."

When her grandfather left her Iris placed candles on the writing table, but did not light them, though it was already pretty dark. She had half an hour to wait; and she wanted to think, and candles are not necessary for meditation. She sat at the open window and suffered her thoughts to ramble where they pleased. This is a restful thing to do, especially if your windows look upon a tolerably busy but not noisy London road. For then it is almost as good as sitting beside a swiftly running stream; the movement of the people below is like the unceasing flow of the current; the sound of the footsteps is like the whisper of the water along the bank; the echo of the half heard talk strikes your ear like the mysterious voices wafted to the banks from the boats as they go by; and the lights of the shops and the street presently become spectral and unreal like lights seen upon the river in the evening.

Iris had a good many pupils—six, in fact, as she had boasted; why, then, was she so strangely disturbed on account of one?

An old tutor by correspondence may be, and very likely is, indifferent about his pupils, because he has had so many; but Iris was a young tutor, and had as yet known few. One of her pupils, for instance, was a gentleman in the fruit and potato line in the borough. By reason of his early education, which had not been neglected so much as entirely omitted, he was unable to personally conduct his accounts. Now a merchant without his accounts is as helpless as a tourist without his Cook. So that he desired, in his mature age, to learn book-keeping, compound addition, subtraction and multiplication. He had no partners, so that he did not want division. But it is difficult—say well nigh impossible—for a middle-aged merchant, not trained in the graces of letter writing, to inspire a young lady with personal regard, even though she is privileged to follow the current of his thoughts day by day and to set him his sums.

Next there was a young fellow of nineteen or twenty, who was beginning life as an assistant teacher in a commercial school at Lower Clapton. This way is a stony and a thorny path to tread; no one walks upon it willingly; those who are compelled to enter upon it speedily either run away and enlist, or they go and find a secluded spot in which to hang themselves. The smoother ways of the profession are only to be entered by one who is the possessor of a degree, and it was the determination of this young man to pass the London University examinations, and obtain the degree of Bachelor. In this way his value in the educational market would be at once doubled, and he could command a better place and lighter work. He showed himself, in his letters, to be an eminently practical, shrewd, selfish and thick-skinned young man, who would quite certainly get on in the world, and was resolved to lose no opportunities, and, with that view, he took as much work out of his tutor as he could get for the money. Had he known that the "I. A." who took such a wonderful amount of trouble with his papers was only a woman, he would certainly have extorted a great deal more work for his money. All this Iris read in his letters and understood. There is no way in which a man more surely and more naturally reveals his true character than in his correspondence, so that after a while, even though the subject of the letters be nothing more interesting than the studies in hand, those who write the letters may learn to know each other if they have but the mother wit to read between the lines. Certainly this young schoolmaster did not know Iris, nor did he desire to discover what she was like, being wholly occupied with the study of himself. Strange and kindly provision of nature. The less desirable a man actually appears to others, the more fondly he loves and believes in himself. I have heard it whispered that Narcissus was a hunchback.

Then there was another pupil, a girl who was working her very hardest in order to become, as she hoped, a first-class governess, and who, poor thing, by reason of natural thickness would never reach even the third rank. Iris would have been sorry for her, because she worked so fiercely and was so stupid, but there was something hard and unsympathetic in her nature which forbade pity. She was miserably poor, too, and had an unsuccessful father, no doubt as stupid as herself, and made pitiful excuses for not forwarding the slender fees with regularity.

Everybody who is poor should be, on that ground alone, worthy of pity and sympathy. But the hardness, and stupidity, and ill-temper, all combined and clearly shown in her letters, repelled her tutor. Iris, who drew imaginary portraits of her pupils, pictured the girl as plain to look upon, with a dull eye, a leathery, pallid cheek, a forehead without sunshine upon it, and lips which seldom parted with a smile.

Then there was, besides, a Cambridge undergraduate. He was neither clever, nor industrious, nor very ambitious he thought that a moderate place was quite good enough for him to aim at, and he found that this unknown and obscure tutor by correspondence was cheap and obliging, and willing to take trouble, and quite as efficacious for his purposes as the most expensive Cambridge coach. Iris presently discovered that he was lazy and luxurious, a deceiver of himself, a dweller in Fool's Paradise, and a consistent shirker of work. Therefore, she disliked him. And she actually knowed

[To be Continued.]

FROM MONROE, LA.

B. M. Wesley Shot and Instantly Killed.

Special to Commercial Herald.

MONROE, Oct. 2.—B. M. Wesley, late of Shreveport, and who moved to this parish, a short time since, was shot and instantly killed at 12:30 p.m. to-day, at West Monroe, just across the river from this place by R. M. Clem. It is claimed on the part of Clem and his friends that the killing was justifiable. The preliminary examination was continued until Monday next.

RAILROAD TROUBLE.

A Strike in the Maraboe Railroad Shops--A Strike of Section Men on the Mexican National Road.

MARABOE, Oct. 2.—A strike occurred at the railroad shops here to-day, which grew out of the restoration of foreman Rogers, and failure to restore men discharged at the time of the difficulty two weeks ago. The Knights of Labor held a meeting to-day, and passed resolutions demanding the restoration of the discharged workmen, and the dismissal of Rogers. A committee has waited upon the superintendent, and he will be present at a meeting of the Knights of Labor for the purpose of adjusting the matter amicably. The men refuse to work if Rogers is restored.

LAREDO, Oct. 2.—A rumor is current here that the section men on the Mexican National railroad, between New Laredo and Saltillo, have struck on account of their wages being reduced from 75 to 50 cents per day. Much curiosity is manifested as to how the Mexicans will conduct the strike.

A NEGRO RAVISHER

Pursued for a Week by a Mob and Corralled in a Cornfield, Shot and Captured.

ST. LOUIS, Oct. 2—Si King, the negro ravisher, who has been pursued for a week by a mob near New London, Mo., was corralled in a cornfield a few miles from that town last night. He was shot twice, but not seriously injured. There is great excitement in that locality and it is not improbable that an attempt will be made to lynch him. Friday, September 25, he outraged two women, Miss Laura Jeffries, of Pike county, and Mrs. Harris of Rolls county, both acts were committed in localities few miles apart. The outrage on Miss Jeffries was committed about 8 o'clock in the morning. King went to the farm-house occupied by E. Jeffries and family. In the barn lot he found Miss Laura, a 17 year old girl milking a cow. The girl says he assaulted her without saying a word. He found Mrs. Harris alone in her farm-house and cocked a pistol and put it at her head, at the same time demanding all the money in the house. She pleaded with him not to kill her, at the same time giving him $115 which was all the money she had in the house. He then grabbed her by the throat and after beating her severely rendering her about half unconscious and perfectly helpless, he dragged her into an adjoining room and outraged her.

Considerable Excitement Caused by a Failure.

KINGSTON, N. Y., Oct. 2—Charles R. Callahan & Co., stock brokers, with headquarters at Newburgh, failed yesterday. Considerable excitement was caused by the failure. The firm's customers lose everything. It will be impossible for the house to resume business. The firm had bucket shops at Newburgh, Middletown, Haverstraw, Roundout, Catskill and Poughkeepsie.